

Wallace (S.P.)

AN ADDRESS
Compliments of
BEFORE THE
Dr. W. Mitchell
Waco Medical Association,

BY

D. E. WALLACE, A. M. M. D.

RETIRING PRESIDENT, AND

President of the State Medical Association of Texas.

DELIVERED JANUARY 26, 1872.

copy



WACO, TEXAS:

GOLLEDGE & TOMLINSON, GENERAL JOB PRINTERS, "ADVANCE" OFFICE.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

WACO, TEXAS, January 11th, 1872.

DR. D. R. WALLACE:

Dear Sir—We, the undersigned, having been appointed a Committee by the Medical Association of this city, of which you were the late President, to ask for publication a copy of the polished, eloquent and appropriate Address read before them upon your retiring from the position you had so honorably and impartially filled, most respectfully express the hope that we may receive an early and affirmative response to this our earnest request for a copy of the same.

With assurances of sincere esteem, we are,

Very respectfully, your friends,

W. P. GUNNELL,	} Committee.
H. W. BROWN,	
S. B. HAMLETT,	
S. A. OWENS,	



WACO, January 11th, 1872.

To W. P. Gunnell, M. D., H. W. Brown, M. D., S. B. Hamlett, M. D.,
S. A. Owens, M. D., Committee:

GENTLEMEN: Thanking you for your very complimentary note soliciting copy of Address, and through you, the body you represent, for their appreciation of the same, I submit it to such further disposition as the Association may see proper to make of it.

Fraternally yours,

D. R. WALLACE.



ERRATA.

Page 5, 10th line from bottom, for "the" read "they."

Page 7, 6th line from top, for "zyncotic" read "zymotic."

Page 8, 20th line from top, the word "Orsis" should be left out.

Page 12, four lines from bottom, for "our" read "the."



Page 14, last two lines, the Latin quotation should read: "*Sed immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum ne pars sincera trahatur.*"



A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSOCIATION: Again we are in the midst of the years. We stand on the threshold of the new. The old is gone—gone, with its achievements and miscarriages, its joys and its sorrows, its gladness and sighs; with its realized hopes and blighted expectations;—gone, with its report, into eternity. Its memory only remains; all else is irrevocable. It is befitting such a period to pause to reflect; to gather wisdom from the past to guide us in the future. We have erred, doubtless; all do, the wise as well as the unwise. But it is the prerogative of the wise only to turn their infirmities to good account, as bees extract sweetness from bitter flowers. Whatever in our retrospection we recall of good; born of high purposes, of noble resolves; whatever of a character to elevate us to a higher plane of manhood—to raise us out of our lower selves, above our groveling basilar instincts—it were not only allowable, but commendable, to dwell upon, to cherish in memory, to gather therefrom strength and inspiration to sustain us in our conflict with a world that will require all the help at command to enable us to quit us like men—to perform our parts with honor to ourselves and usefulness to our fellows, than which we need desire nothing greater, and short of which our aspirations should not permit us to pause.

The most inconspicuous insect that crawls through his unobserved career, has a mission—was created for a definite



purpose—how much more man, made only a little lower than the angels. That every one, be the character of his endowments what they may, has a life work, to which, in the arrangements of society and the orderings of Providence, he is specially called, is the teaching of revelation, and the dictates of reason as well.

“I magnify my office,” exclaimed perhaps the most untiring worker of earth. It was the secret of success of that great man, who left an impress upon the world which it will retain until time shall be no more. It may be questioned whether any one ever achieved anything entitling him to the grateful remembrance of mankind, who was not animated with somewhat of this spirit. To its absence, failure in *all* the departments of human effort is due more largely than to any one cause; more, perhaps, than to all others combined. The mere lack of mind and culture does not account for the lamentable failures on all sides. Observation comes to the elucidation of inspiration, and forces upon attention again and again, as we journey on through life, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Intellect, culture, genius,—desirable all—to be sure should inspire with gratitude those who are so fortunate as to possess them. But alone, they will not stand. No endowment, however exalted; no culture, however profound, will panoply for the battle of life. Inspiration born of noble resolution—a heaven-given enthusiasm, that, in the midst of defeat and difficulties, the gibes and taunts of enemies and the falling away and lukewarmness of friends, sustains and enables the combatant to exclaim, “I magnify my office!”—this it is that insures success. We behold, not seldom, mediocrity armed with this celestial fire, marching steadily onward, step by step, to the goal of success; the while, the most brilliant endowments, dazzling, exciting now the astonishment and admiration of friends, the envy and jealousy of rivals; now spending its energies in erratic displays, desultory, spasmodic flights, finally sink into oblivion.

To excite something of this feeling in our bosoms—to warm our enthusiasm, as we gather about the time-honored altars of our noble profession, is the purpose of the evening.

When we look out upon society—reflect upon its wants and capabilities; its tendencies to evil and susceptibilities for good;—contemplate the instrumentalities employed to counteract the one and to develop the other; the means used for the amelioration of the condition of the race; see, notwithstanding, vice and misery everywhere prevalent;—the most striking feature in the whole survey—the one which one can easily imagine would force itself most irresistibly upon the attention of the thoughtful man, and the one from which he could but retire with a sad, melancholy emotion,—is the little that is accomplished in the direction Heaven seems to have ordained and sanctioned. We read the teachings of the God-man, and, as we realize the wonderful adaptation of these holy precepts to the wants of society and the well-being of each individual, see how all is conceived in infinite love for the race, our souls are stirred into the involuntary exclamation, “Why does not the whole world accept at once and with gratitude the religion of Jesus? Notwithstanding the greatest and best men of earth have been attempting for eighteen and a half centuries to fix the attention of men by an exhibition of these sacred truths, yet it may be said of the great mass of mankind, even in so-called Christian countries, not to mention those who sit in the valley and shadow of death, like Gallio, of old, the “care for none of these things.” What is the explanation? It is not enough to say they are wicked; even that they are totally depraved. The solution of the mystery will be found elsewhere. The followers of Jesus have failed to magnify their office, as did the Apostle of the Gentiles; have ceased to account it an honor to suffer reproach even for the name of the Master. It may be safely asserted that a moiety of the zeal displayed by his immediate followers, would have long since converted the world to the religion of the despised Nazarene.

If the medical profession would accomplish anything worthy the name—anything worthy the age in which we live, and to which we are responsible—we must magnify our office; must seek to honor the profession, not be honored by it; must be willing to labor, to sacrifice interest and ease for it; must regard the profession as something to live for, and not to live by. No man ever was or can be a *Doctor* who does not rise to the conception of the healing art. The great lights in medicine were such, not because so much more gifted than other men, but because they magnified their office. While in need of the common necessities of life for themselves and their families, they literally took no thought as to what they should eat and drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed, so intent were they upon magnifying their office; more anxious to establish a principle than to build a mansion; more concerned about finding a remedy than making a dollar. But doctors have to live. Of course they have—have to eat, drink and wear, like other men. But let us attain to this spirit, and all these things will be added.

It is not necessary in such a presence to insist upon the relative superiority of our profession over most others, to which the wants, vices and passions of men have given rise. A simple enumeration of the duties the educated physician owes to society, would make this self-evident. Did any one of you ever set himself seriously to contemplate the beneficent results to society from our profession, prosecuted practically upon an elevation of plane commensurate with its theoretical dignity? If you have not, allow me to say, you would be struck with astonishment at the spectacle. If you have, I know you realized a temporary lifting up of your soul as you recollected that you belonged to such a profession. But alas! another recollection at hand dispelled the illusion.

I would not dampen your ardor, or darken the picture farther than may be necessary to the purposes of this address. I desire, however, to present a faithful portraiture of the profession in this country. And just here I will remark,

that it is not unforeseen that it may occur to some of you as Quixotic in me, to brand it with no stronger epithet, to be insisting upon medical reform out here in a back-woods village of Texas, thousands of miles away from the great centers of medical influence. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, nor does it signify in what part of the lump the zyncotic process shall begin. I have no sympathy with those who say of this or the other social or other evil, it is irremediable; that this or that particular locality can do nothing in the interest of right and reform. Obscure and remote as it may be, if the Waco Medical Association sets itself to work in earnest for reform, it will make itself felt for good from the Lakes to the Gulf, and from Maine to California. But this by the way. To proceed to set forth the nature of the case, the remedy necessary, and its mode of exhibition.

It is sufficient to startle attention and to stimulate inquiry to remember that some of the greatest and most conscientious men that ever graced the walks of practical medicine, after a leisurely, quiet survey of the whole subject—having weighed the evil and good resulting to society from the so-called healing art, have deliberately concluded that the evil is predominant, and that the profession is damaging to the best interests of society. While I should hesitate long before adopting such a general conclusion, and do so at last when forced upon it by the unyielding logic of facts, most reluctantly, yet I cannot, if I would, conceal from myself the melancholy truth that there is but too much foundation for the suspicion.

The priest, the doctor and the lawyer had their origin in the wants of society, and originally prosecuted their respective duties without charge. To them the term *Professional* was applied. It may possibly be of service to refresh our minds by recurring to the primary meaning of the word—to the primal idea underlying the conception why one man rather than another should be entitled to this honorable designation. It was old Cato who first remarked that as

communities grow corrupt, they lose true names of things.

"Vera vocabula amissimus,"

exclaimed the stern old stoic. Society has dropped out of mind the meaning that originally inhered in the word *Professional*. The word has become debauched—prostituted—by the company with which it has been associated. Sprung from a noble ancestry, at the head of which stands that pure old Latin word, *profittor*, its early employment was in every way worthy its ancestral claims to respectability and honor, and it continued so to demean itself for centuries as to be above suspicion. None were admitted to its companionship—none allowed to assume the honored cognomen but such as, after a most rigid examination as to their fitness, took upon themselves a solemn obligation to devote their lives exclusively to the interests of humanity.

So much for generic *Professional*. Little less instructive the terms by which those engaged in the healing art are especially designated in modern society: the terms Doctor, Physician—the former from *doceo* (I teach), the latter from *orsis*—physis—nature. If Professional originally, in its primary conception, suggested a moral distinction challenging the respect of the world, the specific terms are equally suggestive of intellectual superiority. Reference is made to these terms to remind us of what medical men ought to be; men of moral purity, intellectual superiority, and profound erudition. Contrast the conception of a professional man with the warts, excrescences upon humanity, that infest communities under the name. To confine our field of observation to our own profession, so far from being physicians—*i. e.* acquainted with nature—the whole domain of natural science; not a few are ignorant of the commonest elements of science—persons unable to make a living by their wits in a vocation of which the masses are competent to judge, consequently selecting one in which their ignorance and knavery are not exposed to vulgar scrutiny. That such disgraces to our common humanity are permitted to depredate upon

society; to traffic in the dearest interests—the lives and health of their fellows—is *the fault of the medical profession*. The people generally think and act as they do in regard to such men simply because they know no better. For this ignorance the profession is responsible. Until we bring ourselves to regard the healing art in its true character, and to invest it with its appropriate dignity,—which, by the way, we have not hitherto done—we shall fail, most signally fail, to magnify our office, while the people will continue, as now, the dupes of knaves and charlatans.

We hear much and read more—every medical periodical teeming with it—about the best means of elevating the medical profession. I too would show mine opinion. For some years past the eyes of the profession have been turned imploringly to the medical colleges. Those institutions, in mere mockery, it would seem, have been wrangling about fees, and such extraneous matters, just if it were anything to the purpose whether a medical diploma cost ten or ten thousand dollars. It does not really, and should not constructively, affect the character of an institution, whether its course of instruction be free or charged for at whatever rate may be seen fit. Medical colleges, while they might exercise a most healthy and controlling influence, have proved totally recreant to their trust—have done nothing; nor is it to be presumed, from the present aspect of things, they will do more in the future than they have in the past. Those who control the policy of these institutions, it is not insinuated are worse or less honorable than their professional brethren, yet it is insisted that they have proved totally unequal to the situation. They want full classes—want to outstrip rival institutions. These sordid considerations induce them to matriculate all that apply, and in due time to graduate all who matriculate. So that it has come to pass that a medical diploma means, simply, that the bearer has taken out two full courses of tickets, it mattering nothing whether he attended the lectures or not. This statement

needs no qualification in regard to not a few of the matriculants of the medical schools; for, ignorant of the very rudiments of an education, they are wholly incompetent to understand the plainest scientific lecture. In this country—*i. e.* the United States—any one can graduate, and any one may practice medicine, whether he has ever seen a medical college or not. Nor does it signify. There is infinitely more diplomaed than undiplomaed quackery; and society suffers immensely more from the conceited ignorance of the former than from the depredations of the latter. And, for one, I must say, I have long since ceased to regard a medical diploma as establishing any claims whatever upon my respect. Now for this state of things the medical colleges are directly and wholly responsible. When the medical institutions of the country, that ought to stand as guardians of the purity and dignity of the profession, are deluging society with ignorant, conceited, diplomaed knaves, is it matter of wonder that the people should conclude that old women and plain matter-of-fact, common-sense doctors can practice the healing art, when such coxcombs are adjudged worthy of doing so, and licensed and sent out by the medical colleges—the highest known medical tribunals? *I charge it, therefore, upon the medical colleges of the United States, that they have done more in lowering the standard of information within the profession, and debauching public opinion without, than all other instrumentalities combined.*

All hope from the medical colleges abandoned, what of the American Medical Association? It is matter of regret, I venture to think, that this great body has done so little in the interest of scientific medicine. Though not very well informed in regard to the proceedings, I have given them a cursory examination for the last twenty years, and if there has been any step taken to place scientific medicine out of the reach of charlatanism—to confine it, both in its practice and inculcation, exclusively to scientists—it has escaped my reading. The reason, it is not difficult to understand—the

association, in large part, has been controlled by the colleges. It is not asserted that nothing has been done, looking in this direction. Some efforts have been made, resulting in the establishment of Medical Boards. But these boards, influenced as they have been, by the colleges, have looked rather to the protection of diploma-bearers, than to the interest of scientific medicine.

But I have a word more for these colleges before dismissing them. I would not be understood as intimating that the medical colleges are not doing much in disseminating medical information, but that their labors are, as they should be, in the interest of scientific medicine, may be safely questioned. That they are exerting the influence they should in elevating the standard of the profession, I apprehend no well informed physician will claim. The multiplication of these institutions has become a nuisance, deluging, as they are doing, the entire country with diplomaed quacks, who, so far from being able to take into their uncultivated minds the abstruse problems of disease, are quite unequalled to the task of grappling with the syntax of a single sentence of their vernacular.

I call your attention, gentlemen, to these things, in order to lay before you, as I proposed, a faithful portraiture of the profession, that we may, in our respective spheres, as good citizens and faithful medical men, see what is necessary to do in order to *magnify our office*. Contrast this picture, by no means overdrawn, or in any respect too highly colored, with the medical profession in Prussia. The government of that noble kingdom has instituted such laws and thrown such other safeguards around scientific medicine as are worthy of the imperial splendor of the land of Frederick the Great—worthy the martial glory of William and Bismarck. Among the glorious deeds that have placed Prussia in the front rank of the powers of the world, there is no one of which it has more cause to be justly proud than the fact that not a citizen, however ignorant or humble, in the

realm, but is protected from charlatantry and empiricism, whether the pharmaceutist or the doctor. The unrealized boast of Louis XVI., that he looked forward to the time when there should not be a peasant in all France so poor as not to furnish his board with a *pullet*, pales into insignificance before the beneficent results growing out of the regulations of Prussia on this subject.

That these evils exist—that they are such as represented—no well informed member of the profession will question. What is the remedy? *LEGISLATION.* *The standard of the profession so low; public sentiment so debauched; the evil so inveterate, so interwoven in the frame-work of society, there is, that I see, but one resource, and that is in the strong arm of the Law.* Nothing less potent will suffice to counteract the cormorant avarice of men. But this can be brought to bear only through the medium of public sentiment, and this, in its present debauched state, can only be reached by organized effort. The profession in the United States, thoroughly organized, could accomplish results in this respect beyond the expectation of the most sanguine. But it will require *such organization* as the profession has not yet seen in this country.

But of matters that more immediately concern us locally: The good to accrue to any cause from organization is too obvious to need a word in elucidation. That ours is no better, I regret; that it is as good as it is, I am thankful. Though far from being all we could and should have made it, it has accomplished much. During the last six years—the period of its existence—it has held more sessions, discussed more important matters, I venture to assert, than any similar body on this side of the Mississippi Valley. This is matter of gratulation—something to be proud of—and, for one, I must say, I am proud of it. I am proud of our fraternity of medical men, whose enthusiasm for their profession brings them together every week for scientific discussion; while the matter of fees—of money—is not permitted

to be mentioned within the walls of our association rooms. But had we given more time and labor to informing ourselves and fellow-members—in educating public opinion—we would have been casting bread upon the waters. It is true, in all the departments of life, as in alms-giving: “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” I venture to hope, that by suitable effort, such as will make none of us the worse of it, the Waco Medical Association will make itself felt throughout Texas. More, I am induced to hope further, that this association, in connection with the hundreds and hundreds of educated, big-hearted medical men scattered over our broad State—the Heards, the Eagans, the Joneses, the DeJernetts, the Hudspeths, the Welches, Callaways and Herfs, with others no less prominent—can, within five years, so work up and modify public sentiment, that the practice of medicine in Texas shall be confined to scientists, and quackery unknown. Gentlemen, can this not be accomplished? Let us magnify our office.

The field of medical observation is extensive and diversified. Those engaged in its exploration, from peculiarity of mental structure or habits of thought, will have their attentions directed more intently on some portions of it than on others, and will acquire a correspondingly more accurate knowledge, which may be turned to good account, both for themselves and for the community, where there is a properly organized medical faculty. Each one's merits may be made prominent, to the benefit of himself and the interest of all concerned; being made useful in that special direction for which each one has most qualification. Here let us magnify our office.

The tendencies bearing upon the professional intercourse of physicians are more or less repellant. It is true in this as in every other relation of life, it is best to exercise the better feeling of our manhood. But mankind—doctors with the rest — “are unco weak,” and under the influence of their

lower instincts, albeit resisted by their better judgments, do not act in accordance with their true interests or higher promptings. But associated in an organization for mutual benefit, they learn to appreciate each other's excellencies, and to overlook each other's infirmities. Professional zeal assuming control, they think less of self and more of the general weal; the more basilar instincts subside, or grow weaker, the higher obtaining the mastery. Geniality takes the place of surliness, friendship of that of enmity, envy and jealousy give place to healthy emulation and a noble rivalry. Let us magnify our office.

By organization, such as should exist in every community the size of ours, we are enabled to assert our professional importance in the relation we sustain to society. The occasions are by no means infrequent or unimportant in which it is best for all concerned that this influence should be brought to bear upon community interests. Let us magnify our office.

It only remains for me to say a brief word in taking leave of the position your choice assigned me one year ago. I entered upon the discharge of its duties with misgivings. I have been most agreeably surprised. A record of the proceedings will show at least as many meetings as have ever been held in any previous year, yielding in interest to none previously had. In the mean time, the society has been harmonious, the friction as little, I imagine, as is usually incident to such bodies. It is true, the necessity was forced upon the association to cut off one of its members. In doing so, the society displayed in an eminent degree the virtues that should ever characterize professional gentlemen organized for mutual benefit—moderation and firmness. In the exercise of the one, they exhausted every means of reclaiming an erring brother; but this found impracticable, sustained by the other, they cut him off as unworthy their confraternity. "*Sed immedicabile vulnus euse necidendum, ne pars sincera tra hatur.*"

I thank you, gentlemen, most heartily, for the uniform courtesy with which you have treated me. I shall carry with me, as I pass on down the declivity of years, a pleasing recollection of our intercourse; and if spared to that time, it will be the most grateful reminiscence of age.



FINIS.



